

# DNPAO Legislative Dataset Glossary

The glossary contains legislative terms and definitions that may help clarify common policy concepts and assist newcomers to the field of policy tracking and research.

## **Abstract**

A brief summary of the bill or regulation.

## **Act**

A bill that has been made law by passing the State General Assembly/Legislature and has either been signed by the Governor, filed without the Governor's signature, or passed by both houses of the legislature over the Governor's veto.

## **Administrative Regulation or Rule**

A rule or order that is issued by an agency after a period of notice and public comment. Generally, regulations enforce or amplify laws enacted by the legislature, are promulgated under power granted by a statute, and have the force of law.

## **Agency**

The name of the state agency which promulgates a regulation.

## **Agency Guidance**

Agency Guidance consists of statements and documents issued by an executive agency to supplement or explain regulations and statutes. Agency Guidance includes agency interpretations, policy statements, letters, and advisory materials. In some cases, Agency Guidance has the full force of law. The agency attorney, Attorney General, or District Attorney can provide insight on the effect of Agency Guidance on pending or current program goals.

## **Attorney General's Opinion**

Documents written by a state's Attorney General that are intended to clarify the meaning of existing laws. They do not address matters of fact and are neither legislative nor judicial in nature. Unless or until an opinion is modified or overruled by statute, judicial decision, or subsequent Attorney General opinion, an Attorney General opinion is presumed to correctly state the law. Accordingly, most state courts have held that Attorney General opinions are highly persuasive and are entitled to great weight.

## **Ballot Initiative**

A voter-initiated process of legislating by direct vote of the people. Citizens generally petition to include legislative or constitutional changes on the ballot.

## **Bill**

The principal vehicle employed by lawmakers for introducing proposed laws or proposals to repeal laws in a legislature. Bills are generally designated by the house in which they are first introduced ("H" for House of Representatives, "S" for Senate) and numbered in order of introduction.

## **Bill History**

The dates and legislative actions affecting the bill's passage through the legislature from its introduction to final disposition.

## **Citation**

The section in the state regulatory code where the regulation has been codified. It also appears for legislation that has been chaptered. Regulatory citations include a unique identifier indicating the agency under which it was promulgated.

## **Current Law**

An act or bill which is both in effect and enforceable.

**Effective Date**

The date on which enacted legislation has power to influence a desired result.

**Enact (Enactment)**

To enact a bill is to make it law. Generally, a bill is enacted into law when it passes both houses of a legislature in identical form and is signed by the governor, or is passed over the governor's veto and becomes law without the governor's signature.

**Executive Order**

An order issued by the Executive Branch (state or federal) intended to direct the actions of executive agencies or to set policies for the executive branch to follow. Executive orders are usually issued under power granted in U.S. or state constitutions.

**Health Category**

The broad public health issue (e.g. Nutrition, Physical Activity, or Obesity) which is the primary focus of the legislation or regulation.

**Legislation**

Laws, including enacted bills and resolutions, of a legislature or a legislative body.

**Line item veto**

The power of a Governor, if provided by the state's constitution, to veto any part or parts of legislation. The part or parts that are disapproved do not become law unless reconsidered and passed by the state's legislature. This power is often limited to appropriation bills.

**Ordinance**

A law enacted at the city or municipal level of government.

**Policy Topic**

The subject content within a health category (e.g. Nutrition, Physical Activity, and/or Obesity) to facilitate searching and classification of a specific bill or regulation. Bills can fall under multiple policy topic areas.

**Promulgate**

When an administrative agency publishes a proposed regulation and invites the public to comment on the proposal.

**Record Type**

Indicates whether the content of the record is legislation or regulation.

**Repeal**

The revocation or rescission of a law either in part or in whole.

**Resolution** - A motion that formally expresses the sense, will, or action of a legislative body. See different types below.

- Concurrent Resolution- A resolution passed by one house and agreed to by the other. It expresses the legislature's opinion on a subject but does not have the force of law.
- Joint Resolution- A legislative resolution passed by both houses. It has the force of law and is subject to executive veto.
- Simple Resolution- A resolution passed by one house only. It expresses the opinion or affects the internal affairs of the passing house, but it does not have the force of law or impact the other legislative body.

**Session**

The period during which the Legislative Assembly carries on its regular business. At the state level, a session may be held during a set time every one or two years, or the legislature may meet continuously.

## Session Law

A law that is enacted during a specified legislative term and then published in an annual or other periodic volume listing all laws enacted during that term/session of the legislature.

## Setting

Designates the primary location that will be impacted by the bill/regulation or the intended physical location where the services/programs described in the bill/regulation will be implemented.

- **Community:** Refers to neighborhoods where people live, attend school, work, play, and worship. Foster care programs are indexed under the community setting. Adult care programs that do not occur in a medical facility are assigned to the community setting.
- **Early Care and Education:** Applies to places that provide child day care and education programs for infants and young children typically up to age 6. Includes public or private licensed child care centers, home-based child care, early learning centers, Head Start programs, and pre-kindergarten (pre-K) programs. This setting does not include foster care, before/after school programs, or summer camp.
- **Hospital/Medical Care:** Applies to organizations that provide medical and health care services. Includes hospitals, urgent care centers, primary care facilities, and physician's offices.
- **Restaurant/Retail:** Focuses on those places where food is sold. Includes restaurants, fast food outlets, cafeterias, dairy stores, delicatessens, bakeries, specialty food stores, natural food stores, groceries, convenience stores, supermarkets, sidewalk food vendors, farmers' markets, farm stands, and farms. Do not use for vending machines. For example, if a vending machine is located in a school facility, the setting is "School." If a bill relates to taxation of foods, the setting is "Restaurant/Retail."
- **School:** Refers to educational institutions including elementary schools (kindergarten), middle schools, junior high schools, high schools, charter schools, community colleges, colleges, and universities. These institutions may be private or public. This setting covers before- and after-school programs for school-aged children (beginning in kindergarten) that are offered contiguous to the school day whether in school or a community-based facility (e.g. YMCA).
- **Workplace:** Refers to places of employment, private or public.

If no specific setting is described in the bill, the value "community" is assigned as the default setting.

## Sponsor

The name of one or more legislators/legislative entities that have developed and/or introduced a bill.

## State

The name of the state in which the legislative or regulatory action occurs.

## Status

Identifies the stage of progress of a bill in the legislative or regulatory process. This database contains state legislation in any of the following four stages: Introduced, Enacted, Dead, or Vetoed. The database only contains enacted regulations.

- **Introduced:** Bill that has been entered into the legislative process with no final action yet taken.
- **Enacted:** Bill has passed both Chambers of the state legislature or has been passed by the agency administrative/rule making authority and has become a law.
- **Dead:** Bill has been removed from the legislative process because the legislative session has ended or, the bill was not voted on favorably by the House and/or Senate subcommittees.
- **Vetoed:** Bill passed by the legislature, but later unilaterally stopped by the governor.

**State Statute** - Designates that a bill has gone from a legislative proposal to a written law and is chaptered within the state statutory code; serves as the primary source of law for the state.

**Sunset Clause** - A clause which causes the law to be unenforceable after a certain date, unless it is formally re-enacted or renewed.

**Title**

An assigned name of the Act, by the state legislature when available, or the CDC.

**Veto**

A Governor's failure to sign legislation passed by a state's legislature. A Governor's veto of legislation may be overruled by the state legislature per the state's constitution.

**Year**

The date of a bill's current status, or the year the regulation was enacted.